

September, 12, 2014  
FEDERAL LANDS INTERIM COMMITTEE

Chairman Winder, Chairman Denney and members of the Federal Lands Interim Committee: thank you for the opportunity to address you today, and especially for this additional hearing in Sandpoint.

I do not agree with the Legislature's decision to acquire title to and control of public lands controlled by the federal government in the state. Idahoans when asked, clearly value and enjoy our public lands, and do not want these lands put at risk for sale to private owners.

I moved to the west 25 years ago from New England where there is very little public land left. Some people say that's a good thing, that the economy of New England is better off because land is in private hands. According to an Idaho Outdoor Business Council news release in February 2013, "Outdoor recreation creates more than 77,000 jobs, \$6.3 billion in consumer spending, \$1.8 billion in wages and \$461 million in state and local tax revenue, according to a new report from the Outdoor Industry Association." That sounds like good business to me, and a solid path forward for the future.

All US citizens value and appreciate the wonderful recreational opportunities provided by the West's public lands. We can be thankful to the visionary leaders of the early 20th century who protected our lands and wildlife.

I believe it is Idaho's duty and responsibility to work with agencies of our federal government to balance the uses of our public lands in Idaho. Our right to hunt, fish, camp and hike in Idaho is an essential heritage for all Americans and must be protected.

Based on my own research, I have come to the conclusion that Idaho will be unable to force these lands into state possession. However, if Idaho were successful in this takeover, Idaho citizens would be in a position where the Legislature and Governor would not protect - and would seek to sell - those lands.

Respectfully submitted by:  
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